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OCI No. 2326/65

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
Office of Current Intelligence
25 September 1965

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

Cuban Participation in the Congo Rebellion

1. Accumulating evidence indicates that Cuba has decided to play a substantial role in training and advising the Congolese rebels. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] there is an increasing number of Cuban advisers present with the insurgents in the Fizi region of the Congo on the northwestern shores of Lake Tanganyika. This decision to send guerrilla experts to advise and fight beside the Congolese is a sharp departure from Havana's customary practice--both in Africa and in Latin America--where Cuban participation has been basically limited to propaganda, training in Cuba, and the provision of arms and money.

2. Since at least 1961, Fidel Castro's revolutionary impulses have interested him in Africa in general and the Congo in particular. Training of Congolese dissidents in Cuba apparently began in 1961, and about 15 Congolese traveled to Cuba in 1961-62. We assume that most of them went for guerrilla warfare training, ideological indoctrination, or both. At least one Cuban-trained Congolese was reported in the Stanleyville area before the city fell to the rebels in the summer of 1964. [REDACTED]

3. Such training has continued. In December 1964, for example, [REDACTED] told a US Air Force officer that Egyptian and Algerian transport

USAF and DOS review(s) completed.

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planes returning from flying military supplies--for the Congolese insurgents--to Juba in Sudan were carrying rebels on their return flights to Cairo and Algiers. [redacted] said some of these Congolese were going to Cuba for training. The total number of Congolese trained in Cuba is unknown, however.

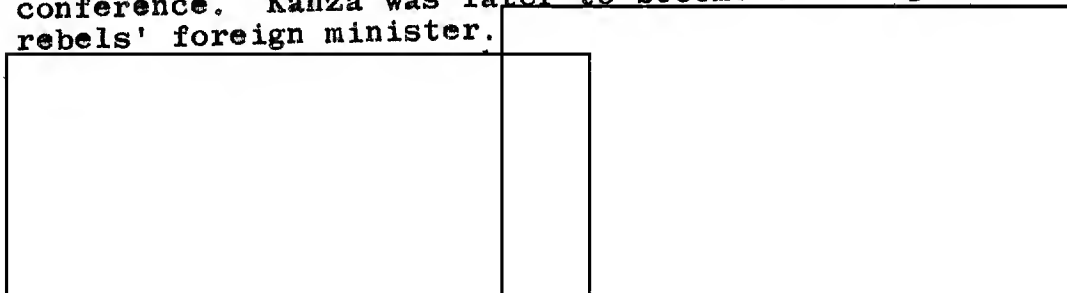
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6. It is unclear exactly when Cuba first began to give serious consideration to training Congolese rebels in Africa and in the Congo itself. Dorticos may have discussed the subject with Thomas Kanza, who was in Cairo last October during the nonaligned conference. Kanza was later to become the Congolese rebels' foreign minister.

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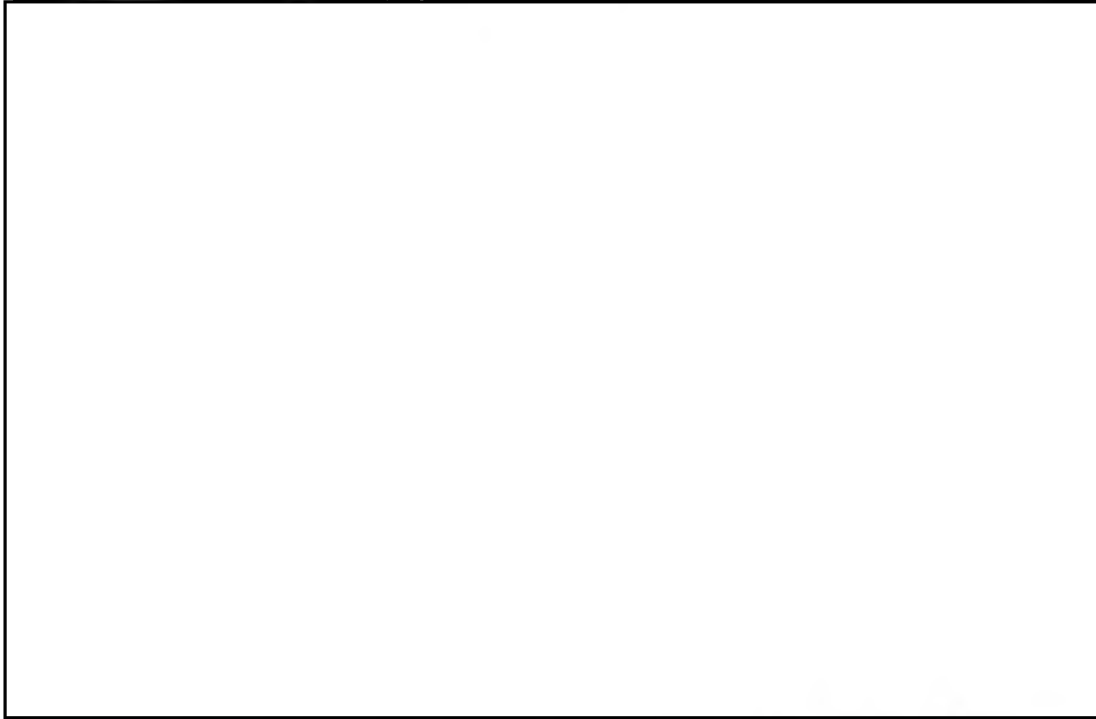
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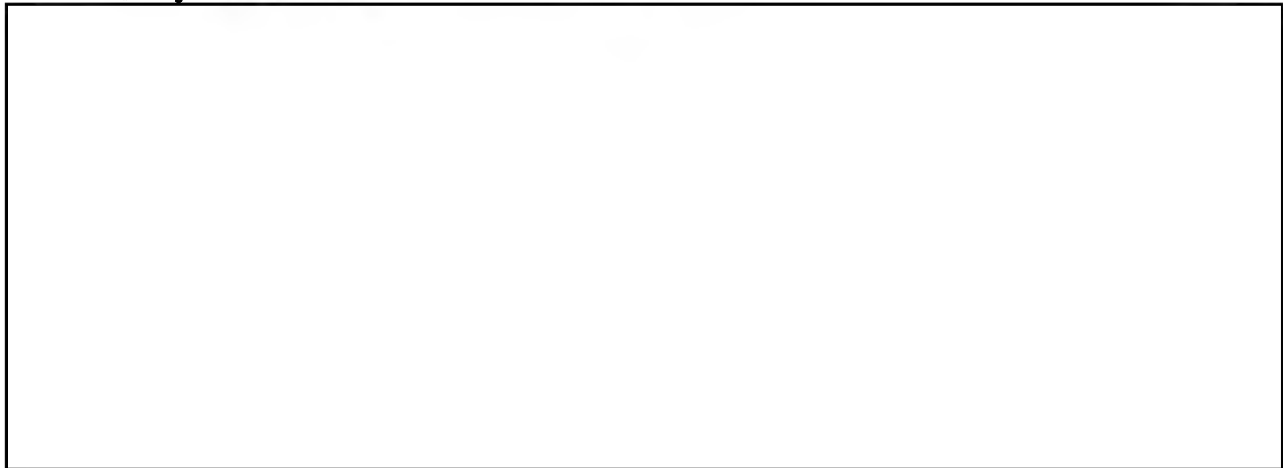


12. An influx of Cubans into Tanzania appears to have occurred recently. The US Embassy in Dar-es-Salaam reported on 10 September that [redacted] [redacted] had seen "several groups of ten or more Cubans" arrive at the Dar airport in late August and early September. The embassy had no information on where they went, but surmised from the source's description that they were "guerrilla warfare experts."

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14. Cuba's increased interest in the Congo is evidenced by the treatment it accorded rebel leader Gaston Soumialot, who visited Havana early this month. He was greeted on his arrival at the airport by President Dorticos and Foreign Minister Raul Roa and appeared on Cuban television with Castro. When he left Havana on 12 September, Castro saw him off.

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15. Prior to his visit to Havana, Soumialot had been in Peking, where he was also given the red carpet treatment. He may also have discussed aid with the Chinese. Small numbers of Chinese have also been reported training Congolese rebels, both in Tanzania and in Fizi. However, we have no evidence of Chinese and Cuban cooperation in this effort.

Outlook

If moderately large numbers of Cubans or other foreign advisers are with the rebels in the eastern Congo, they present a considerable long-term threat to the central government. As the US Embassy in Leopoldville puts it, the "presence of Communist mercenaries will wipe out one of the great advantages which the Congolese government forces heretofore enjoyed over the rebels, i.e., leadership by hard-hitting non-Congolese volunteers." In recent months insurgents in the Fizi area have fought with much more skill than their counterparts in the rest of the Congo.

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